

Superintendent's Corner

May 8, 2020

In these unusual times, with so many uncertainties and unknowns, it's very comforting to realize what an outstanding staff we are blessed to have at Gateway. From our administrative staff, teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians, maintenance staff, cafeteria staff, technology staff, central office staff, nursing staff and all of our specialists in counseling, speech, vision, autism, OT/PT and other therapists, we've experienced staff members nimble enough to adapt to the changed circumstances brought about by the pandemic.

No one would have guessed at the beginning of this school year the extent to which education, and our world, would change over the course of just a few weeks and all caused by a small collection of nucleic acids that can't replicate or survive outside of a host. The COVID-19 virus, at least temporarily, has changed how we work, live, and play. Despite these significant changes, Gateway staff quickly stepped up to the plate and transitioned from the traditional to the non-traditional. Instead of coming to work physically on a regular basis, they moved to a combination of working from home, keeping a respectable social distance at the workplace, moving to virtual meetings and remote learning, moving from hot meals served in a cafeteria to "grab and go" meals, moving from the routine cleaning and maintenance of occupied buildings to deep cleaning and sanitizing of almost empty buildings, from answering phones and dealing with children to running offices without being able to be in them every day, from dealing with a few issues with technology to running an entire district almost exclusively using technology, from counseling students face to face to telecounseling, from running a multimillion-dollar business office with help in the next office to doing it almost exclusively via computer, and from working and supervising staff directly to do it all virtually. None of their jobs are the same, no job has gotten easier or required less work, and no one was aware of the extent of change this virus would have upon how we serve our communities, our families, and our students.

Yet despite this, our staff made it possible to move forward, to face the challenges, to balance the new reality of work with the new reality of being relegated to staying home, to deal with many of their favorite places being deemed non-essential and closed for weeks, and to transition so well from what was routine to what was certainly a bit new, unusual, and challenging.

I suspect that this is also evident in our town officials and staff that keep things running, the lights on, and the bills paid despite the challenges. Also, a special shout out to all the first responders and front-line staff that continue to serve all of us in spite of the risk of infection, the unknowns of the virus, and the lack of essential personal protective equipment.

So thank you for all you do, for being patient with the changes, collaborative when dealing with problems, innovative in surmounting challenges, and most of all, for being such a valued member of the Gateway community. I certainly look forward to the day when things return to a more "normal" status, but until then, stay well, be safe, and enjoy the spring weather as much as you can. You've all earned it.